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PINR, AMGT, TF, BE
SUBJECT: BELGIUM: H1N1 CASES CONTINUE TO FALL IN JANUARY

REF: 2010 BRUSSELS 155

SUMMARY

¶1. On February 11, 2010, the Government of Belgium's Interministerial Influenza Commission (IIC) announced an estimated 626 new cases of the H1N1 virus in Belgium for the week of January 25 to January 31 (week 5), and an estimated 257 cases during January 18 to 24. Two additional H1N1-related deaths were reported between January 18 and January 31; in total, nineteen Belgians have died from H1N1-related causes since the outbreak began in spring 2009. The total estimated number of positive cases in Belgium since April 2009 is now 211,137. Health authorities caution that the virus could still return, as they believe a large portion of the population has not yet been exposed to the virus. As a sign of the decline in cases, the IIC is now reporting data every two weeks instead of weekly. End summary.

Falling Cases in January 2010

¶2. Although there were an estimated 626 cases the last week of January, the previous week of January 18 to January 24 saw the lowest number of cases since the onset of the H1N1 virus in spring ¶2009.

TWO ADDITIONAL DEATHS IN 2010; TOTAL OF 19

¶3. Between January 18 and January 31, the IIC attributed two additional deaths to the virus, bringing the total since the onset of the epidemic to nineteen. According to the Scientific Institute of Public Health, the H1N1 virus has not had an impact on the country's mortality rate.

INFLUENZA COMMISSION REPORTS NOW BI-WEEKLY

¶4. As the number of estimated cases has fallen since the onset and peak of the H1N1 outbreak, the IIC has gone from sending daily reports initially, to weekly reports, and now to bi-weekly reports. The IIC continues to note, however, that H1N1 could potentially hit more, given that many Belgians have not been exposed to the virus.

¶5. BELGIAN H1N1 CASES (ESTIMATED UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED*)

WEEK DATE NUMBER CASES CUMULATIVE
 NUMBER CASES

05	JAN 25-31	626	211,137
04	JAN 18-24	257	210,511

03	JAN 11-17	1,084	210,254
02	JAN 4-10	1,289	209,170
01	DEC 28-JAN 3	465	207,881
52	DEC 21-27	1,665	207,416
51	DEC 14-20	2,091	205,761
50	DEC 7-13	4,474	203,670
49	NOV 30-DEC 6	5,403	199,196
48	NOV 23-29	8,186	193,793
47	NOV 16-22	11,730	185,607

(Source: Scientific Institute Public Health)

*total of individuals testing positive during that period

(Note: Belgium ceased individual testing for H1N1 in mid-July 2009, and since then has used extrapolations from a system relying on data based on cases of patients who visit the approximately 180 doctors who make up the so-called national H1N1 network.)

GUTMAN